



**For Immediate Release
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**STATE ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION FEATURES TREE PLANTINGS
AND DEDICATION OF NEW WAVERLEY TRAIL IN BELMONT**
Massachusetts Arbor Day Poster Contest Winner Announced

BELMONT—The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and numerous partners celebrated Arbor Day today with an event at the Butler School in Belmont with a ceremony to honor the winner of DCR's 2007 Arbor Day Poster Contest, and the dedication of the new Waverley Trail. Oak trees were also planted on both the Belmont and Waltham side of Beaver Brook Reservation by YouthBuild volunteers, sponsored by the Eagle Eye Institute, as part of an Arbor Day tree planting initiative in 13 communities statewide.

"On Arbor Day, we learn about, care for and plant trees," said Massachusetts Undersecretary for Environment Philip Griffiths. "On this Arbor Day, we are also recognizing the Waverley Oaks, historic trees that have influenced the conservation tradition in this country."

The Waverley Trail, a new $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile interpretive trail, highlights the role of the historic Waverley Oaks that in the 1890s inspired the creation of the world's first land trust (now known as The Trustees of Reservations) and the nation's first regional park system (the Metropolitan Parks Commission, predecessor to the Metropolitan District Commissioner and DCR). Numerous private citizens, businesses and non-profit organizations in Belmont and Waltham contributed to the trail's conception, design and construction.

"The Waverley Trail celebration is symbolic of the past, present and future of conservation in Belmont and Waltham and throughout the Commonwealth," said Jim Levitt, Waverley Trail Advisory Committee Chairman. "The Waverley Oaks inspired some of the first modern, organized conservation efforts in history. Their legacy continues to the present day: the citizens of Belmont and Waltham were instrumental in realizing the trail. And in the YouthBuild Coalition members planting trees today, we can see the future conservationists of Massachusetts."

The ceremony also honored Hope Russell of Chocksett Middle School in Sterling, winner of the 2007 DCR Arbor Day Poster Contest. This year's theme, "Trees are Terrific, and Forests are Too," drew entries from more than 1,500 fifth-graders in public and private schools across the Commonwealth.

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In addition to its tree plantings in Belmont and Waltham, the Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition, in partnership with Eagle Eye Institute and DCR, carried out simultaneous tree plantings in 13 cities and towns across Massachusetts to highlight Arbor Day. More than 200 trees were planted: 100 in Boston and more than 100 in 12 other municipalities: Belmont, Brockton, Cambridge, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Quincy, Somerville, Springfield, and Worcester.

Along with helping to beautify these communities, these tree plantings will increase the tree canopy, especially in low income urban communities, help restore equity across city neighborhoods and bring the health and economic benefits that trees provide; increase community awareness of the valuable role that trees play in an urban environment; and, provide opportunities for local service learning, including hands-on participation, related to urban and community forestry, with an emphasis on reaching out to communities of color.

“Our partnership with YouthBuild USA and the Eagle Eye Institute links urban youth to their local environments and seeks to instill in them the conservation ethic that will make them the environmental leaders of tomorrow,” said Acting Commissioner Geigis. “As the motto of this event states, these youth are *‘Planting Roots for Our Future.’*”

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